#18970 the meetings Book

A VINDICATION OF The DOCTRINE Concerning the Light Within, Againſt the OBJECTIONS OF *George Keith.*

In his Book, Entituled,

The Deiſm of W. PENN, *and his Brethren Expos'd.*

By *EDMUND ELYS.*

London, Printed and Sold by *T. Sowle*, in *White-Hart-Court*, in *Gracious-Street*, and at the *Bible* in *Leaden-Hall-Street*, 1699.

A VINDICATION OF THE DOCTRINE Concerning the Light Within, &c.

I Deſire that *G. Keith*, for his own Souls ſake, would give me ſome Publick Satisfaction, for the Publick Injury he has done me, in endeavouring to make the World believe, that I am one of that ſort of Men, who call themſelves *Deiſts*. It is my Reſolution by the Grace of GOD, to ſhew *All Meekneſs to* G. K. and to *All Men*. But I wou'd have it obſerv'd, that it is not inconſiſtent with *Chriſtian Meekneſs*, to expreſs our ſelves with the greateſt Severity in our *Authoritative* Reflections on any thing moſt groſly and notoriouſly *Impious*. I ſhall ſay no more to induce the Candid Reader to ſuch Reſpects towards Me, as are requiſite for a due Reception of what I ſhall here deliver in Defence of that moſt important Truth, which G. K. p. 3. plainly declares that he hath *Renounced*, *viz.* that "The Inward Evidence of the Spirit, as "touching the great Matters of the Chriſtian Faith, is the PRIN-"CIPAL Rule of Faith, and Life.

By the Inward Evidence of the Spirit I understand, that TRUTH, which *the Spirit of* TRUTH has *Written in the Hearts of* All Men, together with all the Influences of the Spirit upon the Hearts of Men, Exciting them to a due Reflection on *the Law of GOD Written in their Hearts*; " Thou shalt Love the Lord thy " GOD with All thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and thy " Neighbour as thy Self. The Inward Evidence of the Spirit in this Sence I Aver to be the PRINCIPAL *Rule of Faith and Life:* All External Revelations, Teachings, and Instructions, are to be Receiv'd in a way of *Subordination* thereunto. This is the Rule, or Measure, which we Ought Chiefly and Principally to Follow; or be Led by, in all our Inquiries what we Ought to believe for our *Soul's Health*, for the Improvement of our *Sanctification*. The Cause that any Man *Refuses* to yield his *Assent* to any *Sanctifying Truth*, is, that he Acteth Contrary to this Rule. *G. K.* discovers his gross Ignorance of the Truth I here Assert, in that he affirms in his *Narrative*, that the " *Jews* " *and the Pagan Philosophers*, who Blasphem'd against the Man " *Jesus of Nazareth*, did own, and confess to the Light Within: To which in my Publish'd *Reflections* on that *Narrative*, I gave this Answer: " The *Jews*, and *Pagans wou'd* most certainly " have Believ'd the Gospel Preach'd unto them, if they had " *Own'd the Light within*, that is to say, if they had been " Ready to yield their *Assent* to any Doctrine Preached unto " them, to which they could have *no Reason* to Deny their " *Assent*.

These words of *W. Penn*, which *G. Keith* Recites, p. 9, & 12. I highly Approve. " By General Rule, we understand that " constant Measure, by which Men in all Ages have been en- " abled to judge of the Truth and Error of Doctrines, and the " Good, or Evil, of Thoughts, Words, or Actions.

" By Faith, we understand an Assent of the Mind, in such " manner to the Discoveries made of God thereto, as to resign " up to God, and have dependence upon him, as the great " Creator, and Saviour of his People.

But says *G. K.* p. 10. " This General Rule did not extend, " nor doth, to be the Rule, or a Rule of the Faith of Remission " of Sin, by the Blood of the promised Seed of the Woman,

" the

" the Lamb of God that was to be Slain, and ſhould take away " the Sin of the World. To this I Anſwer, That whoſoever *Obſerves* this Rule, does *Virtually or Implicitly* Believe all the Truth Delivered in the *Holy Scriptures*, in that he is in a Readineſs to Receive it, whenever it ſhall be Propoſed unto him in Terms which he clearly underſtands.

P. 25. " Seeing the Light Within, ſays *G. K.* gives them not " this Faith (the Faith of Chriſt the great Sacrifice) nor teach- " eth it them, it evidently follows that the Light Within every " Man is not the Rule of the Chriſtian Faith. To this I An- ſwer, That the Light Within every Man gives to every Man, that does not *Rebel* againſt it, the Faith of Chriſt the great Sacrifice; ſo that when any thing Relating to our Saviour ſhall be duly Propoſed to him, as the Object of his Faith, he will moſt certainly embrace it, or yield a ſincere Aſſent unto it.

P. 48. " Nothing can be a Rule of Chriſtian Faith, as in re- " ſpect of the peculiar Doctrines of the Chriſtian Religion, but " that Doctrine, which ſets before our Minds certain Propoſiti- " ons of Truth, to which the Mind can, and ought to Aſſent, " from ſufficient Motives of Credibility.

Anſw. We ought not to *Aſſent* to any Affirmations *Externally* Propoſed, as Objects of the Chriſtian Faith, unleſs we can Apprehend in them a Suitableneſs, or Correſpondence with That which *the Spirit of* TRUTH *has Written in the Hearts* of All Men. The *Quakers* Acknowledge that upon this Account they are *Obliged* to Believe all the Doctrine Contain'd in that *Form of ſound Words*, which we call *The* NICENE CREED. *B. C.* one of *W. Penn*'s *Brethren*, in his Book Entituled, *The* Quakers *clear'd from being Apoſtates*, hath theſe Words, " The *Quakers* Believe " the Subſtance of the *Nicene Creed*. I earneſtly Requeſt all Per- ſons, who Profeſs themſelves to be True Members of the *Church of England*, to obſerve theſe words in the ſame Book, p. 57. " I ſay, He would have as truly repreſented the *Presbyterians*, " as he hath done the *Quakers*: If he had ſaid of them, that " they held Univerſal Grace, and that there was never any ſuch " Thing in the World, as the *Solemn* League and Covenant, " and no ſuch Man as the Biſhop of St. *Andrews* Murdered, or " that King *Charles* the Firſt cut off his own Head, or that they

" never

" never Hanged Men only for being *Quakers*, or that their Bre-
" thren in *SCOTLAND* were for Univreſal Liberty, not-
" withſtanding their Barbarity to the EPISCOPAL Clergy,
" and their Deſign to Excommunicate all Perſons that ſhould
" Buy, or Sell with, or Entertain a *Quaker*, which had took ef-
" fect, had not the Clemency of the King Interpoſed, to break
" their Miſchievous Deſigns.

P. 59. *G. K.* exclaims againſt *W. Penn* for calling *The Spirit, The Rule of Faith*, The Spirit being the *Principal Efficient* of Faith, and not the *Inſtrumental* Cauſe of it. To this I Anſwer: That 'tis Evident when *W. Penn* calls *The Spirit* the Rule, he underſtands our *Participations* of the Divine Spirit, the Impreſſions of *Truth*, that *The Spirit of* TRUTH has made upon our Hearts. That this is *W. Penn*'s Meaning appears moſt evidently, in that he allow'd his Son (who was a Wonderful Ingenious Young Man) to Publiſh a ſhort Treatiſe of mine, Entituled, " *Vindiciæ Quorundam* R. Barclaij Noematum, *&c.* with His own Tranſlation, in which are theſe words: " If we by the *Holy Ghoſt*
" underſtand GOD, *viz.* the Third Perſon of the Holy Trinity,
" I confeſs we ought not to call Him the *Rule* of Faith, and Man-*
" *ners*; ſince the Rule of Faith is that *Inſtrument* by which we
" *rightly* Examine what is the Object of the Chriſtian Faith, or
" what that is, that Chriſt hath laid down for us to Believe:
" But we may alſo underſtand by the *Holy Ghoſt* [I ſhould have
" Tranſlated it, *The Divine Spirit*] our Partaking (my word is
" *Participatio*) of the Divine Spirit, with which Every Rational
" Soul is endu'd by an *Idea* of the moſt Great and moſt Good
" GOD, Ingrafted in its Nature: In which ſence we by right
" ought to ſay, The Spirit is the Principal, or Chief Rule of our
" Faith, to which the Scriptures themſelves are Subordinate.
" For we only Perceive they carry a Divine Sence, as far as we
" feel their *Congruity* with the *Idea*, or Impreſſion of the *Divine*
" *Being*, which *God himſelf* hath fixed in our Hearts.

* *i. e.* in a Strict Logical way of Speaking.

" *R. BARCLAY*'s Proteſtation, of which his Learned Adver-
" ſary ſpeaks, p. 226. pleaſes me much. That he, with thoſe of
" his Religion, are willing their Doctrines and Practices ſhould
" be Try'd by the Holy Scriptures, and to admit as a poſitive,
" and certain Maxim, that whatſoever any do, pretending to be

" led

" led by the Spirit, which is contrary to the Holy Scriptures, " ſhould be reputed a Deluſion of the Devil.

P. 66. " Excepting the common Principles of Juſtice and " Temperance, all other things relating either to Faith, or Life, " with reſpect to the peculiar Doctrines, and Precepts of the " Chriſtian Religion, are not to be found at all in the Light " Within every Man, abſtractly, and by it ſelf conſider'd.

Anſw. It implies the groſſeſt Contradiction, that *The Light Within* ſhould be conſider'd abſtractly from CHRIST, ſince by that *Light* we underſtand *Chriſt himſelf*, and all that Comes " from Him, Tending to the Conviction, and Converſion of " Sinners. *In Jeſus Chriſt*, The Light Within, The True Light that Enlighteneth Every Man, are *Hid All the Treaſures of Wiſdom, and Knowledge*: So that whoſoever does not *Rebel* againſt The Light Shining in ſome Meaſure in his own Heart, does *Virtually* Believe all the Truth, the Belief whereof is neceſſary for his SALVATION.

P. 135. " Whether the Spirit of Chriſt (whoſe Judgment " and Determination is all one with that of Chriſt, and the Fa- " ther) doth give his Judgment to the Church, and the Mem- " bers of it, by any other Law, or Rule, Meaſure, or Standard, " than what is already to be found in the Holy Scriptures, whe- " ther relating to Articles of Faith, or poſitive Precepts of Re- " vealed, and Inſtituted Religion, by Chriſt, and his Apoſtles in " the New Teſtament?

To this I Anſwer, That in Matters that Concern the Whole Church, or any Particular Congregation, or any Single Perſon, in that it is his Duty to Demonſtrate to another, that this, or that, is his Duty; in theſe, and the like Caſes, the *Spirit of Chriſt* gives his Judgment by no other Law or Rule, Meaſure or Standard, than what is already to be found in the Holy Scriptures: But as to Particular Matters, that Concern my own Soul, in reference to the *Fundamental* Divine Law, " Thou ſhalt Love the " Lord thy God with all thy Heart, *&c.* where I have no Obligation to Demonſtrate to others that I ſhould *Sin*, if I ſhould not Do this, or that, the *Spirit of Chriſt* will give his Judgment by the *Particular Illuminations* I receive from Him, which imply ſuch *Notices* of Perſons, and Things, and of my own Particular:

cular Abilities, and Inabilities, together with the Remembrances of such and such Reflections upon my own Experiences of the Divine Justice, and Mercy, *&c.* from which, through the Influence of *the Spirit of Truth and Love*, there arises a Lively Sense of an Obligation to such Performances, which it may be no Person upon Earth can clearly Perceive by any *Text of Scripture*, that it is my Duty to undertake. No Man living can say, It was my Duty to Do what I have Done in Defence of the Doctrine concerning the *Light Within*: But yet it is so Evident to Me that it was My Duty, that *I Rejoyce, and am Exceeding Glad*, whenever I Hear My self *Reproach'd* (as I have been by Many, particularly by *G. Keith*) for this *Conscientious* Undertaking: And I would rather *lay down my Life*, than Promise, or Ingage my self Not to Publish this present Writing, being thereunto *Call'd* by HIM, who *Searcheth the Heart, and Tryeth the Reins*: And will *bring Every Work into Judgment, with Every Secret thing, whether it be Good, or whether it be Evil.*

COME LORD JESUS.

FINIS.

388100